

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUWAIT 04612 301205Z

20

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SP-02 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-07

NSC-05 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

LAB-04 SIL-01 L-03 H-02 DODE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 IO-13

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R 301051Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6341

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

COMIDEASTFOR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USCINCEUR

CINCUSNAVEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 4612

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, KU, IZ, BA

SUBJ: COMIDEASTFOR MEETING WITH MFA UNDERSECRETARY

1. SUMMARY: DURING SEPT. 29 VISIT OF RADM CROWE, COMIDEASTFOR, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR, MFA UNDERSECRETARY RASHID AL-RASHID REVIEWED GENERAL SITUATION IN PERSIAN GULF, NOTING THAT KUWAIT WAS SEEKING TO PROMOTE REGIONAL COOPERATION IN ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FIELDS THERE. HE CITED POTENTIAL THREAT TO KUWAIT
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 KUWAIT 04612 301205Z

SECURITY, IF IT WERE TO OCCUR, AS LIKELY TO DEVELOP FROM

SUBVERSION RATHER THAN COME FROM OUTSIDE. HOWEVER, HE CONCEDED THAT GOK POLICY OF ESTABLISHING FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH ALL ITS NEIGHBORS HAD NOT SUCCEEDED TOO WELL WITH IRAQ. RASHID ALSO SURFACED CONNECTION BETWEEN IRAQ-KUWAIT BORDER DISPUTES, AND IRAQ DESIRE FOR CESSION BY KUWAIT OF BUBIYAN ISLAND LOCATED STRATEGICALLY AT HEAD OF PERSIAN GULF. ON SUBJECT OF MIDDLE EAST FORCE PRESENCE IN GULF, RASHID SAW NO OBJECTION FROM KUWAIT SIDE AND THOUGHT BAHRAIN MIGHT REVIEW ITS POSITION ON SCHEDULED DEPARTURE OF MIDDLE EAST FORCE IN JUNE 1977. END SUMMARY.

2. RADM CROWE, COMMANDER, MIDDLE EAST FORCE, WHO CAME TO KUWAIT IN CONNECTION WITH VISIT OF USS CAPODANNO, CALLED ON MFA UNDERSECRETARY RASHID AL-RASHID IN COMPANY OF THE AMBASSADOR. IN AN EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF GENERAL SITUATION IN THE PERSIAN GULF, RASHID SPOKE INITIALLY OF KUWAIT'S EFFORTS AND INTERESTS TO DEVELOP REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE GULF AREA. IN THIS CONNECTION HE WAS REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO THE ARAB GULF STATES, INCLUDING SAUDI ARABIA. RASHID ALSO INDICATED KUWAIT'S INTEREST IN HAVING IRAQ PLAY A ROLE PROVIDED IT DID NOT SEEK TO ESTABLISH A DOMINANT INFLUENCE ON THE SMALLER GULF STATES. HE ALSO STRESSED THE INTEREST OF THE GULF STATES IN DEVELOPMENTS WHICH TOOK PLACE IN IRAN. THEY WERE AWARE OF IRAN'S LONG BORDER WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND THE POTENTIAL COMMUNIST THREAT TO THE WHOLE AREA. IN RESPONSE TO A SPECIFIC QUESTION BY THE AMBASSADOR, RASHID AFFIRMED THAT THIS INTEREST IN REGIONAL COOPERATION EXTENDED ONLY IN THE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FIELDS AND DID NOT COVER SECURITY MATTERS.

3. ADMIRAL CROWE STATED IN THIS CONNECTION THAT HIS COMMAND (MIDDLE EAST FORCE) CONTRIBUTED TO THE STABILITY AND PEACE IN THE GULF AREA. RASHID CONCEDED THAT THIS WAS PROBABLY TRUE. AMBASSADOR THEN ASKED RASHID HOW HE VIEWED SECURITY SITUATION IN THE GULF.

4. IN AN EXTENDED REVIEW FEATURED BY CIRCUMLOCUTIONS FOR WHICH RASHID IS WELL KNOWN IN THE KUWAIT DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY, HE EXPLAINED THAT ANY POTENTIAL THREAT TO KUWAIT'S CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 KUWAIT 04612 301205Z

SECURITY WOULD PROBABLY TAKE THE FORM OF INTERNAL SUBVERSION RATHER THAN EXTERNAL AGGRESSION. RASHID DESCRIBED STEPS TAKEN ONE MONTH AGO BY AMIR (DISSOLUTION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, REVISION OF CONSTITUTION AND RESTRICTIONS ON PRESS) AS DESIGNED TO FORESTALL DEVELOPMENTS OF THIS NATURE WHICH COULD BE STIMULATED FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES. WITHOUT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONING IRAQ, RASHID LEFT NO DOUBT THAT IT WOULD BE ONE OF THESE SOURCES. HE

ALSO MADE NO SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO PALESTINIANS, BUT IT WAS CLEAR THAT THEY TOO WERE NOT TO BE EXCLUDED.

5. WITH RESPECT TO ANY EXTERNAL THREAT, RASHID SAID THAT KUWAIT HAD PURSUE CAREFUL POLICY OF CULTIVATING GOOD RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS AND FELT THAT THIS POLICY HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL.

6. AMBASSADOR QUESTIONED RASHID ON THIS POINT, NOTING THAT LAST TIME HE WAS STATIONED IN GULF SOME 15 YEARS AGO, THERE WAS SERIOUS INCIDENT BETWEEN KUWAIT AND IRAQ WHICH RESULTED IN BRITISH TROOPS COMING TO KUWAIT'S DEFENSE. UPON HIS RETURN TO THE AREA, THERE WAS AGAIN AN INCIDENT WITH IRAQ ON THE BORDER QUESTION. RASHID CONCEDED THAT KUWAIT'S DIPLOMATIC POLICY HAD NOT BEEN TOO SUCCESSFUL WITH IRAQ. HE SAID THAT KUWAIT HAD MADE NUMEROUS EFFORTS TO RESOLVE BORDER PROBLEM, WHICH HE BELIEVED WOULD BE EASY IF IRAQ WERE WILLING, BUT, EACH TIME THIS WAS RAISED, IRAQ COUNTERED WITH A DEMAND FOR THE CESSION OF BUBIYAN ISLAND, LOCATED STRATEGICALLY IN FRONT OF THE IRAQ PORT OF UMM QASR. KUWAIT, OF COURSE, HAD NO INTENTION OF CEDING THIS TERRITORY AND RASHID STRESSED THAT IT WOULD REMAIN FIRM IN ITS POSITION ON THIS QUESTION AND THAT OF THE BORDER AS WELL, RASHID BECAME QUITE ANIMATED IN HIS DISCUSSION OF THIS MATTER AND PRODUCED A MAP IN ORDER TO SHOW ADMIRAL CROWE HOW SESSION OF BUBIYAN ISLAND WOULD LEAD TO PROBABLE EVENTUAL ANNEXATION OF KUWAIT BY IRAQ.

7. STILL IN THIS CONTEXT, FOCUS OF DISCUSSION RETURNED TO ROLE OF MIDDLE EAST FORCE, WHICH ADMIRAL CROWE REITERATED COULD BE VIEWED AS FACTOR FOR PEACE IN THE AREA. RASHID INDICATED GOK HAD NO PROBLEM WITH ITS PRESENCE IN THE GULF AND HE COULD NOT DISAGREE WITH ADMIRAL'S VIEW.
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PAGE 04 KUWAIT 04612 301205Z

AMBASSADOR THEN COMMENTED ON REPORTS HE HAD HEARD FROM BAHRAIN WHICH INDICATED KUWAIT WAS PUTTING PRESSURE ON GOB TO REMOVE MIDDLE EAST FORCE. RASHID CONFIRMED THAT THERE HAD CERTAINLY BEEN PUBLIC PRESSURES FROM KUWAIT, PARTICULARLY IN THE PRESS, AGAINST THE PRESENCE OF MIDDLE EAST FOR CE IN THE GULF, BUT STATED THAT GOB HAD BEEN SUBJECT TO NUMEROUS INTERNAL PRESSURES WHICH FOCUSED ON MIDDLE EAST FORCE, BUT THAT IT COULD NOT BE EXCLUDED THAT GOB WOULD REVERSE ITS POSITION. HE IMPLIED THAT GOK WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO CONTINUED PRESENCE OF MIDDLE EAST FORCE.

8. COMMENT: THIS CONVERSATION PROVIDED ADMIRAL CROWE WITH USEFUL REVIEW OF GULF SECURITY SITUATION AS SEEN BY KUWAITIS AS WELL AS AN INDICATION THAT GOK WOULD NOT BE AVERSE TO CONTINUED PRESENCE OF HIS COMMAND AT BAHRAIN.

OTHER INTERESTING FEATURE OF DISCUSSION WAS THE SPECIFIC
CONNECTION OF IRAQ'S DEMAND FOR BUBIYAN ISLAND WITH
ITS BORDER DISPUTE WITH KUWAIT.
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